J. C. Harrison

"THE PEOPLE'S DAY."

AN APPEAL

TO THE

RIGHT HON. LORD STANLEY, M.P.,

AGAINST HIS ADVOCACY

OF

A FRENCH SUNDAY.

BY

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&c.

My Lord,—

As one who, though little able to promote their welfare, feels a deep interest in the working people of this country, I heard your Lordship's very able speech on the motion for promoting Sunday exhibitions with extreme concern. When a youthful statesman inherits, as your Lordship does, name and talent which assure to him an important influence in the State, even obscure individuals like myself have a personal interest in such of his opinions as bear upon morals and civil rights. I, therefore, with much deference, crave your Lordship's attention to a few considerations, which may, at least, raise a doubt whether the views advanced by your Lordship, on the occasion referred to, do not hurtfully bear upon both. Nothing can be farther from my thoughts than to insinuate that your Lordship suspected any such tendency in your views. Indeed, your want of acquaintance with the practical bearings of the question was obvious, and is easily accounted for by your position, which has placed you far from the knowledge of those wrongs under which many smart, through Sunday oppression.

Your Lordship laid down the general principle,—which is incontrovertible,—that "no institution, however sacred, can be in itself an end; it must be a means to an end." Beside this we may place another general principle,—that if, in addition to the true ends of any institution, you introduce

foreign ones, the true will probably be defeated. The Sabbath is an institution, the ends of which are rest and religion. Your Lordship's view of its end is too narrow. "Intellectual and moral improvement" by no means meets all the benevolent uses for which the Creator was pleased *for man* to make the Sabbath. Its ends are rest and religion; affecting all the physical, moral, and social interests which these affect. Under cover of the vague phrase, "intellectual and moral improvement," a foreign end concealed itself from your notice. What your Lordship, and the gentlemen with whom it was your misfortune to act, really pleaded for was, that to rest and religion we should add amusement. The former we in England, judging from God's word, take to be the true ends of the Sabbath. The last, in France and elsewhere, taught by the Church of Rome and human nature,—two sources of light somewhat extolled in the debate,—they hold to be a desirable addition. Now, should it, on investigation, seem probable that the introduction of this questionable end would defeat, even partially, the two unquestionable ones, I am quite sure your Lordship would not continue to be its advocate; indeed, I do not say that, though you did most effectively advocate it, you clearly saw to what your plea tended.

If, in the speech of Sir Joshua Walmsley, who strangely was your Lordship's leader, one thing could be called weaker than another, it was when he endeavoured to confine the labour question, as affected by his motion, to the petty consideration whether more or fewer attendants would be required in the Museums. To believe that your Lordship was following him even in this required the evidence of all one's ears; but your best friends could not doubt it. It was plain that your Lordship saw no more than a question of ten, or twenty, or fifty officials. Indeed, as to this branch of the subject, you avowed, that "all the arguments you had heard or read" went to this,—that, "by opening those institutions, unnecessary labour would be thrown on Government officials." For the nation's sake let me entreat your Lordship, before espousing the un-English side of great social questions, to hear and read a little more. Thousands of not unthinking men object to the proposal, not merely because it

would rob a few individuals of the Lord's day, but because it is one of a set of measures which menace the sacred rest of every working man in England.

Suppose that your Lordship's views were met, the Museums open, twenty thousand visitors entering them each Sunday, and one attendant employed for every five hundred visitors; this would be forty. That number may be either more or less than would be actually required; but such is your Lordship's supposition, and the case would be little altered by doubling or diminishing the number. Then, the first effect of your Lordship's measure would be, that forty Englishmen would find the Lord's day, instead of a day of rest, a working day. Hitherto they have considered it a birthright given to them by the good-will of Heaven, and the whole tenor of British law, for the physical benefits of rest, and the spiritual benefits of worship. It is probable that by many of them it has been used for its holiest ends; to all it has been a periodical call to remember their highest destinies, and to train their families in good ways; but now it becomes a call to sell, for bread, at once their civil birthright and their conscientious scruples. Thus, to forty men the day is changed, from a rest and a moral aid, to a tyranny and a demoralization.

Were the proposal made to them, some would say, with all the respect due to you, but with the firmness of a man in his right, "We would not sell our Sabbath for all that Parliament can vote away." These men, my Lord, are just of the class to whom you may ever look as the strength of the State. Others of them would say, "It is hard that a man cannot have his Sunday to himself; but we can't starve." These men belong to a class who constitute the weakness of States. Some again would say, "We shall be paid for it, and that will make all right." These belong to a class who ever constitute the danger of States.

But your Lordship has a reply for those of them who would object. *Servants in private families do more work for fewer people.* This was an *argumentum ad hominem* for your Parliamentary audience; but did your Lordship use it to a religious working man, he would smile to think on what a

different level from his your experience had been gained. His answer would be, that in *good* families servants only do such work as is necessary,—work without which the food and comfort needful to make the day an enjoyment could not be provided; that such work is done in all houses, and ought to be done; that this is no reason for work that is not necessary; that in some families—ay, my Lord, in fearfully many families—servants are worked on the Lord's day, as if Heaven had never thought of them; and perhaps the working man, with a flash of his eye, would say, "Do you mean, because you drive *them*, to drive *us?*" It is probable your Lordship has never had a respectable servant come to you with looks of distress, and such a tale as this: "I am sure I don't know what to do. If I leave, I am afraid I shall hardly get another place; for leaving so soon looks so bad, and mistress will be so angry I am not sure she will give me a good character: but I cannot stay; for all one's Sunday one is worked like a heathen."

When your Lordship has darkened the light of the Sabbath in forty English homes, only the first blow is struck. Your twenty thousand Sunday visitors must, as Mr. Goulburn truly said, come, for the most part, from some distance. To bring them to the spot, many poor servants of van-owners would then find the Lord's day a working day, and, instead of a call toward heaven, a call to barter away home, repose, and religion. Many omnibus men, to whom some miserable shred of a Sunday morning, for a longer sleep and a leisurely breakfast, had remained as a slender token that God has some care for a poor man, would find even that gone. Probably your Lordship has never heard an omnibus man say, with a jerk of his reins, "Us!—no one believes as we have got any souls. They give us one Sunday in five, and it is not enough to make up sleep, worked like we are. Gentlemen can afford to have souls."

Then, as the crowd teems in and out, a confectioner eyes them. He never sold on Sunday; but what a chance! His wife asks if they are going to sacrifice the only day of peace they have; and his daughters cry at the thought of

being behind the counter all Sunday; but the bait is too attractive. A rival tradesman rises from his fire on Sunday afternoon, stands at the window, and, after a long look, exclaims, "This will cut us up. If he does all this business on Sundays, he can afford to undersell us in the week. It is too bad, but we must open in self-defence." The visitors are often caught in the rain, and the sellers of old umbrellas consequently find "good call." A greedy draper takes the hint; parasols for heat, umbrellas for wet, gloves, and the like, soon begin to be looked for. Many women find they can as well do a little shopping when they come to see the sights. Some shopkeepers go into a rage, but still open in self-defence; some gladly ply the opportunity; and some vow they will be ruined rather than open. So it proceeds till, when a shopman goes into New Oxford Street or St. Martin's Lane to look for a situation, he finds that two out of three shops require Sunday work. Doubtless, your Lordship never saw a country youth bravely striving to get through his tale, then breaking into tears as he related how he found that in shop after shop he was asked to work on the Sabbath; whereas in "his town" that was looked on as heathen bondage. This, thank God, is not yet the case in the higher shops; but here, just as elsewhere, the lower a man sinks, the less is he able to protect himself. Many a shopman in this free city of ours already does "seven days' work for six days' wages."

While this is proceeding, the call is made to open exhibitions, which are private property. Why not the Turkish Exhibition? Models are as good as pictures. Why not Wyld's Great Globe? Geography is better than amusement. Why not Madame Tussaud's? Why not Astley's? Why not a dozen others? Your Lordship is consistent. Because Kew is open, you would open the Museums. Because many gentlemen work their servants without remorse, you would work officials. *A fortiori,* because Museums are opened, smaller exhibitions should be opened. Because the nation works its servants, private exhibitors should work theirs. Each new exhibition thrown open robs of their rest and religion a small number of attendants, and each carries a

retinue of shops in its train. Then comes this demand:—men who have been working all Sunday need recreation, and therefore the theatres must be opened. On what score could your Lordship resist it? Men are not to keep their religious scruples, but to sell them; not to keep the Sabbath, but to show and see shows. After such a Sunday they are fit for nothing but the play and the dancing-room, and these they must have. These once opened, surely the Post-Office is as good as the playhouse, business as sacred as comedy. The letters then come in on Sunday. A number of houses in the city advertise in the "Times," that orders from the country are executed any day in the week. Other houses find their "accounts" leaving them, because they keep orders over the Sunday. Then comes the struggle, whether the warehousemen of London will retain the blessing which God gave to their fathers, and their fathers left to them; or lay down their Sabbath at your Lordship's feet, and be hereafter seven days' drudges for six days' pay; ay, for less than their old six days' pay.

By this time the sacredness of the day is destroyed. Your Lordship has observed enough to know how soon the constant sight of Sunday work and Sunday amusements weakens the sense of the day's sacredness with Englishmen on the Continent. Those who never lost that feeling among signs of rest and religion, lose it totally among signs of work and play, and become as ready for either work or play as if they had never been in England. Would not the same influences at home produce the same results? Would not jewellers, and all other tradesmen, here as elsewhere,—would not bankers and merchants,—would not manufacturers and farmers, feel they had as good a right to work their men, as your Lordship feels you have to work servants and Government officials? Would not workshops and factories be kept going upon Sundays as in other countries? And thus that hallowed shade, under which the English working man now rests his day, none daring to make him afraid, being hewn from above his head, he would be driven a ceaseless round of drudgery; and the PEOPLE'S DAY would be a bitter day, when men worked, remembering

that their fathers rested, and then would go at night to casinos, plays, and drink, to drown the sense of degradation!

I feel assured your Lordship would be the last of men willingly to abet the bringing of your country to this. Indeed, the very slight consideration you have given to the bearing of the proposal on labour, was not more manifest in confining your view to the case of forty officials, than in your concluding remark, meant to be an answer to Mr. Kinnaird. He, in his own language, and by reading a clear and practical view of the case from the "Times," had set before the House the connexion between national exhibitions, private shows, theatres, and Sunday trade. Your Lordship thought this was answered by saying, "The line of demarcation between places of innocent and improving recreation, and those of a wholly opposite character, would be easily defined by those not wilfully blind to it." Your Lordship did not deny that persons so blind do exist. London contains many an apprentice who has never spread his thoughts abroad over nations, or lifted them up to heaven, or carried them forward to his after-life. He lives his day as it comes, and works or plays, the one as he must, the other as he can. To him Sunday is the day on which he has not to work, and no more. He has no taste for religion, and much for what he calls a "spree." He thinks it very hard that what he does not enjoy should stand in the way of what he does. He never reflects that, if it were not for religion, the day would not be his, but his master's. He has never heard that in Christian countries, where religion, according to the philosophy of Mr. Biggs, takes its hue from human nature, apprentice boys have no Sabbath. Having his day to enjoy, he rushes into whatever door offers to him the greatest amount of indulgence, without, perhaps, a single reflection as to the effect of this on his permanent character; and certainly without any reflection as to its effect upon the nation; or, if conscience does trouble him, he is "wilfully blind," as your Lordship observed, and rushes on. How many poor lads, just such as this, must we take it for granted, are to be found every Sunday among our two millions of London population?

After hearing the late debate, one would find it a hard

task to prove that every honourable member of the House of Commons has views of the Sabbath much more elevated and far-sighted, much more statesman-like and godly, than those of the apprentice boy.

But beside this class of "wilfully blind," there would be another class whom, strange as it may seem, conscience would help to blind. Many who firmly believe that the Sabbath is a law of God, a most merciful law, would, through the influence of general example, offend against their conscience. Under its sting, they would be in no temper to draw fine distinctions between doubtfully wrong, clearly wrong, and dreadfully wrong. I know a case of a thoughtful working man, who says he first learned to use his own rest so as not to infringe on that of others, from the following circumstance: —The baker's boy delayed in bringing his Sunday pie longer than his patience lasted. In reply to his sharp words, the youth exclaimed, "What! I am going to hell for you, as fast as I can, and it is not fast enough to please you." Your Lordship would, doubtless, be prepared to show this youth that he was doing, not evil, but good. Be assured that he had heard, though in ruder phrase, all the arguments you could use; yet such was the state of his feeling. Are men in this mood likely to seek for intellectual and improving "recreations," or to rush upon that which will best drown reflection?

A large number who would stand above the direct effects of these temptations, would yet swell your Lordship's class of "wilfully blind." The respectable exhibition which first made the Lord's day a day to be kept according to fancy, and the loose diversions which solaced jaded men for the loss of the day, would differ, in the view of many, just in this,—that the one was the high-bred patron, the other the low-bred *protégé*.

Your Lordship plainly wished to parry Mr. Kinnaird's conclusion of SEVEN DAYS' WORK FOR SIX DAYS' WAGES. Did you believe that innovating on the holiness of the Sabbath would indeed end in that, I am sure you would forfeit the coronet of your fathers rather than abet it. But,

my Lord, the conclusion is the natural result of your beginning. Why is Sunday "the people's day," as in the debate it was again and again proclaimed to be? Simply because it is THE LORD'S DAY. Its rest depends upon its religion. Destroy its sacredness, take that seventh of our time out of the one Hand to which the Peer and the apprentice bow, count it amongst our own possessions, place it at our own disposal, and it will soon share the fate of all that is ours. A struggle will commence as to who shall own it; as in all struggles, the weakest will be vanquished; and the day that was "the people's" will speedily become the masters' day. Can your Lordship name one country in which the day is desecrated by amusements, and yet is, in such a sense as in England, "the people's day?"

Your Lordship may suppose, that in this country the downward process could be arrested long before it reached such a point. That is possible; but, *on your Lordship's principle,* it is *not even possible:* for with you every violation of the day is a reason for its further violation, and every subordinate worked by his superiors becomes a reason for oppressing others. Either this reasoning is downright bad, or at every step we take in the descent we ought to gain additional impetus, until we lie at the bottom, unable to descend farther. If the movement should ever be arrested, it would be, not by your Lordship's principles, but by the reaction which their application would provoke. Of that reaction, the vote on the question, and the appeals to members by their constituencies which led to that vote, are significant symptoms: the people begin to see to what our railway and other desecrations of the Lord's day tend. But any downward process goes on with fearful facility in human nature, and desecration propagates itself fast. It is, however, probable that, were your Lordship's principles pushed a little further, various classes beginning to see their own Sabbath menaced, and the conscience which exists in the land becoming thoroughly awakened, a voice would come from the homes of the people which would make the authors of our new "Book of Sports" quake. The restless and the thoughtless among the working classes might catch at

the bait of sport, not seeing the oppression it concealed; but, my Lord, masses of thinking men would stand up, strong in the sense of their right, calm in the approval of conscience, and would say, that the Sabbath was the birthright of every Englishman by the law of the land and the law of God; working men would take up pens, which statesmen might respect, and once again write "Essays on the Sabbath," such as those "Essays by Working Men" which every statesman ought to read before he speaks of "all he has heard and read" on a question which affects every poor man's home. The daughters of our working men would again plead for "The Pearl of Days;" the shopmen who have known so well how to claim shorter hours would rise to defend their Sabbath; and even the artisans who, in their independence, think they can have their own day and yet rob other labourers of theirs, would find that, if the Sabbath were gone, Sunday would be a working day, and would cry out, "Let the labourers employed for our pleasure rest, rather than we should all be forced to drudge together."

No charter which men ever won by their life-blood carries such an amount of civil right as that which measures out to all subordinates, whether son or daughter, man-servant or maid-servant, one-seventh of their entire life-time, wherein their superiors may not exact from them any work of mere business or pleasure; wherein, except from acts of duty, they are free,—free to devote themselves to healthful rest and holy enjoyment. Erase from the public mind this idea of "the Lord's day," and replace it by the French idea of Sunday, and all those civil rights disappear.

Suppose that next Sunday morning your Lordship started from Charing-Cross for a walk through London, which your honourable helpers in the late debate thought had such need to take a lesson from continental cities. In the vicinity of Trafalgar Square you find no shopmen or shopwomen behind the counter; it is the assistant's day. At the National Gallery no porter is in waiting; it is the official's day. In Long-Acre the coachmakers' workshops are silent; it

is the mechanic's day. In Lincoln's-Inn Fields the lawyers' offices are peaceful; it is the clerk's day. In the Strand and Printing-House Square the offices of the great daily journals are at least partially at rest; it is the pressman's and compositor's day, the reporter's day, the editor's day. At the Post-Office no car is clattering, no man hurrying; it is the carrier's day. In Cheapside and Wood Street no warehouse is open; it is the salesman's day. At the Bank no pen is moving; it is the clerk's day. In Spitalfields no foot is upon the treadle, no hand upon the shuttle; it is the weaver's day. In Brick Lane no drays are rolling, no whips cracking; it is the drayman's day. In new streets no shoulder bears a hod, no hand is on the trowel; it is the bricklayer's day. At the wharves no figure bends under a load; it is the porter's day, the coalheaver's day. Surely your Lordship does not bear within you a heart which, reviewing all this, would not fill with emotion, and thank God! Surely, as your thoughts passed over the three kingdoms, and you marked the millions of labourers, from little girls to wrinkled men, who, for the moment, with no master over them but the Almighty, rested safe from the call of the covetous, the thoughtless, or the cruel, you would say, "He spake well who called that institution 'a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable,' whereby these eyes are enabled to see this touching image of a world where 'the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest!'" Surely you could not, then, look without compassion on those who, in low shops and on railways, say, "To us this is not the Lord's day, it is our master's day!"

At the same hour on the following Sunday your Lordship starts for a similar walk in Paris. The moment you leave the Place de la Concorde you find, in the Rue Royale, shopmen and shopwomen behind the counter; it is the employer's day. In the first bank you reach on the Boulevards, the clerks are at the desk; it is the banker's day. In the Faubourgs the mechanics are busy; it is the manufacturer's day. The Post-Office is full of working men; it is the merchant's day. The Rue Rivoli rings with the mason's hammer; it is the contractor's day. In the timber-yards

you hear the saw; it is the master's day. In the Rue Montmartre Emile de Girardin is at his desk, and his fellow-editors, his reporters, his printers, all are busy; it is the subscriber's day. Turn where you will, every man is in his employer's power just as on other days; the charter of freedom is in no hand, the joy of freedom at no fireside. In the shops of the Palais Royal are hearts which would love a rest as dearly as those of Regent Street; but what Mr. Kinnaird called "the hand of rapacity" is over them. The working men of Paris are no more enamoured of labour than those of Westminster or Spitalfields; but "the hand of rapacity" is over them. Nor does the evil press on the humbler workers only. Each man in turn has his employer; the merchant, the banker, the legislator, does not escape the burden which he compels his inferiors to endure; the curse he imposes upon others comes back upon himself, and none can call the day his own; he only excepted to whom every day is a rest if he choose.

Why, then, is this, that here, in London, every man can defy "the hand of rapacity" on one-seventh of all the days that come, whilst in the neighbouring capital no man can defy it but he who is totally independent of occupation? Because *here* is a day which no man can claim, the LORD's day, too sacred for amusement, too sacred even for work; a day on which the labour that is profitable must stand still, under the assurance that the God of the Sabbath will more than make up the loss. Because *there* is no LORD's day; the Sunday is not too sacred for amusement, consequently far less so for profitable labour. Where the Sabbath is used for its own ends, rest promotes religion. Where to these ends the foreign one of amusement is added, instead of a day of rest and religion, it is a day of drudgery, with an evening of dissipation. The barrier between a day of rest and religion, and one of drudgery and dissipation, is only the sacredness of the day. Man's rights rest upon God's rights; the repose of the Sunday, on the religion of the Sabbath. Destroy that in England, then the physical toil and the moral pest of the French Sunday will at once invade the nation. From the rough hodman to the

accomplished editor, THE SACREDNESS OF THE DAY IS THE LABOURER'S ONLY SHIELD.

One thing which would hasten our progress towards the curse of seven days' labour, if once the public sense of the Sabbath's sacredness were impaired, is the intensity of our commercial energy, as compared with that of other nations. Even in a secluded and thinly peopled country like Sweden, where, being Protestants, they profess to shut up shops, the day is taken for posting books, opening packages, taking stock, and other in-door work; and in the brisk season down come the shutters. If this be the case there, what would it be here, where, as your Lordship so truly remarks, we are "driven on by that competition which urges us all forward, man against man?" Soon we should be weekly "driven on" ten or twelve mortal hours more; while over our restless tread-mill stood inscribed by national history, in old and sacred characters, the blessed Sabbath law. Would it be a comfortable sight for your Lordship, when coming down Regent Street, some Sunday morning, on your way to a Railway Committee in the House, to see among regular rows of open shops, as you probably have often seen on the Boulevard des Italiens, a single window closed, with these words on the shutters?—"*This shop is shut on Sunday, in obedience to the commandments of God.*"

An ill-kept Sunday drags labour on and on till every hour has its demand. A well-kept Sabbath tends to relieve labour, even before the sacred hours set in. Already the Saturday afternoon is beginning to feel the influence of the coming rest. In Manchester, in London, and elsewhere, large classes are favoured with a half-holiday. Many more employers are ready to enter into it, if it be generally adopted. This step at once opens all channels of desirable recreation, and protects the everlasting right and duty of one day for the Lord. Is it too much to hope that your Lordship, instead of leading those who would invade "the most venerable and the most valuable" privilege of the whole people, will manfully take your post at the head of those who desire to add to it what would be its natural complement? The plea, that the

Museums must be closed on Saturday, to be cleaned, is absurd. If they *cannot* be cleaned at night, or between daylight and ten o'clock A.M., let some day belonging to leisurely people, who need so much time for small performances, be taken, and not the day which is suitable for those who would engage to have them well cleaned, without a broom being ever seen after ten o'clock in the morning.

The classes (not gentry) who most desire Sunday amusements are to be found among shopmen, clerks, and mechanics. The short-sightedness of the former two is not wonderful: men who do not guide themselves by God's laws in matters of pleasure, have ever been, and ever will be, the foes of their own interests. The answer to these two classes is simple: Destroy the religion of the Sabbath, and in seven years clerks will be at the desk, and shopmen behind the counter. As to mechanics, they, of all classes, have the least need to invade the holiness of the day for entertainment. Freer than any class but gentry, they choose their own working time. In all our towns it is usual for them to take Monday to themselves, often Tuesday. The mechanic who spends his Sabbath in the service of God, is found refreshed in body, sober in mind, and cheerful in heart for his Monday's work. He who has spent it in pleasure, is jaded, unhinged, and in want of more excitement. The country loses his Monday's labour, through having lost his Sunday's rest. His family loses the day's wages, and more than that, spent in the public-house. His soul loses the sacred effects of obedience to the ordinance of the Creator.

Apart from rest, there is another respect in which the Lord's day is the people's day; their day for fostering domestic affection, which, next to religion, promotes national stability. It is with multitudes the only day when a father can spend some hours with his wife and children; when an old man can see his daughter, when a lad stands again by his mother's knee, and a young man sits once more by that fireside, the very sight of which retouches all his good feelings, and shames some which he is beginning to learn in the world. There are mothers who rejoice when the day comes that will bring "the children" home; and sons and

daughters who love no hour of the week so well as the hour of Sunday morning, when they turn towards "the dear old spot." Nor does a Lord's day pass but some poor girl sheds tears over the letter from home, which tells how ill mother is; but "it is no use asking the day to oneself; there is to be a party, and no feeling for the like of me." Not a Sunday comes but, as the railway Director is devoutly in his pew, or dutifully paying his weekly visit to his aged mother, the curse of some strong man falls on his head, because word has come that *his* mother (for all men have mothers) is dying; but no Lord's day for him; he must mount the engine; and as he sweeps past the spot whence he can almost see his own village, a passing-bell seems to mingle its pathos with the brawl of the train, and he blasphemes God, and curses the day when he first saw a rail. Every step toward diminishing the sacredness of the day goes to multiply such cases.

A few years ago, a lady with many distinguished titles to public regard was summoned to the death-bed of her father. She was stopped on the way, because a Scotch railway did not work on Sunday. A noble heart ached; and the press of the three kingdoms rang with the hardship of the Duchess, who could not reach her father's side, and receive his dying blessing. This case ought never to be forgotten. Why did it excite such feeling? Surely not because the affections hurt were those of a Duchess, so much as because a woman's heart was so placed that, when stricken, it was before the eye of all. And if the anguish of that one heart moved so many mighty pens, what in common fairness is due from the press to the thousands who cannot, like ladies, see fathers and mothers as often as they please; but who, after being long confined to short and uncertain snatches of their presence, when told that soon they will see them no more, cannot even obtain God's blessed day to go and see them before they die? Surely this case has not found men of letters, noble Lords, and gentle ladies such slender thinkers, that it has passed over them, and left but an impression so superficial as this: "What a hardship that a strict view of Sunday should hinder the Duchess from seeing her father!" Surely it has led

many to say, "If it is so touching to see one daughter, whose affections hardship had never before crossed, kept from her father's death-bed, how distressing to think that, by a thoughtless misuse of the Lord's day, multitudes, who have seldom been able to visit their parents, should be prevented from doing so at the last!"

Whether we judge by the experience of all Europe and America, or by the natural connexion existing between the different steps of a social process, we are led to these conclusions:—

You cannot open great exhibitions without opening lesser ones.

You cannot open exhibitions without opening shops.

You cannot open shops in the day-time without opening places of amusement at night.

You cannot do all this on the Sabbath without destroying the public sense of the sacredness of the day.

You cannot destroy the public sense of the sacredness of the day without letting loose the tide of ordinary secular labour.

My Lord, as you love a people who are worthy of your love, be entreated to retrace the one step you have taken in a course which would deprive the English labourer of what a labourer's daughter has called, "The Pearl of Days!" For, rob him of the Lord's day, and his week would be a hard, rude shell, from which the "pearl" was taken.

As to that branch of the question which your Lordship was pleased to consider the most important, and on which the greater part of your speech was bestowed, namely, the true view of Sabbath duties, I must crave permission to offer a few observations. It was altogether necessary for you to prove that the end you aimed at was holy; for the means were manifestly bad, and, therefore, must be sanctified by the end. The means were, to destroy the Sabbath of a few; the end was, to afford additional opportunities of seeing curiosities and pictures to many. To prove the sanctity of this end you argued most ingeniously. And if

seeing Museums had the moral efficacy which your Lordship's study of history, and of the connexion between intellect, art, and morals, has led you to expect from it, the means, if not justified by the end, certainly would be palliated.

With the principle laid down by your Lordship, that "the theory which seeks to establish a kind of antagonism between things secular and things sacred" is ill-founded, I am quite disposed to concur. It is not a theory drawn from the Christian Scriptures. There the distinction lies not between secular and sacred so much as between right and wrong. All duties are held to be sacred, violation of duty the reverse. The notion that a certain class of duties are under a kind of ban, and that only devotion and penance are sacred, though early imported into Christianity, diffused through it in the Middle Ages, and yet far from being worked out, is much more akin to the religion of Hindus than to that of Christ. But Christianity does teach that in duties there is order,—order both as to time and precedence. It is the duty of your Lordship's servant to eat and drink; for, if he left this undone, he could do no other duty whatever: yet a command to attend on you would absolve him from that duty for the moment. Did your Lordship fix a certain hour for him to wait upon you, it would be totally inconsistent with his duty to take that hour for his meals. Yet, using the formula of argument, *mutatis mutandis,* by which your Lordship proves the desirableness of Sabbath sight-seeing, he might reason thus: "I don't mean to say that taking my meals is as important and valuable a service to my master as waiting upon his person; but I do say that, taking it for what it is worth, it is a part of his service." Yet, notwithstanding all this, he would be guilty of a breach of duty in the untimely performance of that duty.

It is possible for even the highest class of acts to become wrong, by being performed when other acts are the duty of the moment. Your Lordship would count it morally wrong for a man, at this moment steering a ship in the Thames, to leave the helm and go below to read his Bible. By that untimely performance of what is certainly a sacred

duty, instead of what is called a secular one, he might bring upon his head the guilt of blood. Is it not possible that even the duty of seeing exhibitions, however sacred it may be, may yet, by superseding other duties, become wrong?

Your Lordship's argument is: "I do not mean to say that a man would learn in a Museum or a picture-gallery that which would be so important or so valuable to him as what he could learn at church; but I do say that, taking it for what it is worth, intellectual and moral improvement is itself a part of religion." It is wonderful that your Lordship could fall into so simple an error as that of proving what all agree to, namely, that "intellectual and moral improvement is part of religion." Of course it is; every duty is part of religion; for no duty can be neglected without moral fault. But two separate sophisms lie in that one short sentence, the first proving what was not in dispute, the second assuming what was; namely, that to make the Lord's day a day for seeing Museums is a means of moral improvement. Practising at a target is a military duty; yet, did a Captain plead, as a reason for his Company's absence on the day fixed for a general review, that military improvement was a duty, he would soon be told that his proceeding was the high road to military disorganization. What your Lordship had to prove was, that to seek such improvement as may be found only at exhibitions is a duty proper to the Lord's day; for, if it be not, it tends to demoralize. You contented yourself with proving that improvement was a part of religion, and thence you assumed that visiting exhibitions was a right use of "the most venerable and most valuable institution which has come down to us from past ages." If the Author of the day has assigned to it other and higher works as its proper works, which this, however useful at other times, would supersede, then, as surely as the officer who sends his men to target practice when they should be at review is guilty, as surely as the steersman who forsakes the helm for the Bible is guilty, so surely the man who forsakes acts of devotion and works of mercy for sight-seeing is guilty.

Apply your Lordship's reasoning to another case:—"I do not mean to say that a man will learn in the House of Com-

mons what would be so important or so valuable to him as what he may learn in church; but I do say that, taking it for what it is worth, serving one's country is part of religion." Which of your co-legislators would not assent to this? Yet, if your Lordship proceeded to infer that the House should sit on Sunday, would not the labour question meet you in the most excited form? Would not the cry arise on all hands, that no man should take their Sabbath from them? Would not some ask if you meant to bring England to witness such an absurdity in the House of Lords as is often witnessed in Sweden, where the Diet towards the end of the Session sits on Sunday, after morning service of course, when the Clergy are seen in their robes legislating on the Lord's day? Yet your Lordship's reasoning tells quite as clearly and powerfully for making laws as a duty proper to the Lord's day, as for seeing exhibitions. You carefully avoid the position, that the day has no proper and appointed duties; and this, though thankfully to be placed to the credit of your Christianity, is fatal to your logic. Had you taken that position, it would follow that any engagements in themselves innocent, were innocent on that day; but, not having taken it, you can raise no argument as to engagements not assigned to the day in Scripture.

But, unconsciously no doubt, you did argue on the assumption that the Lord's day is a portion of time without its own special and assigned duties; for you evidently took it for granted that whatever is innocent on other days of the week is innocent on the Sabbath. If so, there is no Sabbath, no portion of time fenced round from the inroads of ordinary toils and cares, which every man may consider sacredly preserved for the rest of his body and the edification of his soul. Your Lordship, doubtless, is not prepared for this conclusion. It would involve too serious a reflection on the moral government of our Creator, to suppose that He had not set apart for man any portion of time for higher purposes than those that end at the grave. It would ring the death-knell of too many human privileges, to suppose that no portion of man's time was rendered sacred by the protection of God against the claims of power or of avarice. But to one of these two alternatives we

are forced,—either that some things which are innocent on the week-day are not innocent on the Lord's day, or that man is left without a Sabbath.

But though your Lordship did not say that the Lord's day is a portion of time which has no fixed duties, you were careful to show that the opinion prevalent in the country, as to what those duties are, is seriously erroneous. More adroitly than accurately, you described that opinion as being that the day must be devoted to subjects "exclusively theological." These terms are not ill chosen, if meant to edge the antipathy of those to whom the service of God is a dry matter; but very ill, if meant to express the view taken of the Sabbath by those to whom His service is a delight. They would never think of saying that the whole of the Sabbath was to be employed in subjects and studies "exclusively theological." They would rather say that it was to be religiously kept; meaning by this, that it must be spent in thankful rest; in glad and single-hearted enjoyment of the mercies of Providence; in doing good to the poor, the sick, and the ignorant; in acts of private, family, and public worship; in useful reading, innocent intercourse, and the singing of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. These are the views which your Lordship had to oppose, and which you really did oppose, though you covered them with a mask of your own. Not content with arguing that such views of the Sabbath were incorrect, you brought against them an astounding, not to say a "railing, accusation." "I believe that this exclusive appropriation of the day of rest in popular opinion to subjects exclusively theological, lies infinitely more than want of education at the bottom of that ignorance which we all lament; and I believe that, unless we apply some remedy in this direction, all educational measures, even such as that which my right honourable friend has lately introduced, will be comparatively useless."

During the days that have elapsed since these remarkable words were uttered, your Lordship may be assured they have been read by many a grey-haired and holy man with indignation and shame,—indignation, that those to whom the nation

has to look up, take so little pains to make themselves acquainted with questions which touch the very core of the State; and shame, that, having taken so little pains, they expose their crudities in the face of the sun. What! the doctrine that one day in seven is to be devoted to heavenly purposes, a weight upon intellect, and a barrier against education! Are we down here, on Adam's earth, legislating for Adam's children, whose nature has been ascertained by a thousand experiments, of which the results are preserved to us in history? Or are we really on some new planet, legislating for a race whose nature is untried, and for whom history has yet to begin?

The statesman has to navigate on a wide and restless sea. If he fix his eye only on the waves which rise and sink at the moment, he will never discover his way. He must have two guides, which these do not affect,—a compass and a star. Revelation is his star, shining out of the bosom of heaven; experience is his compass, held up in history as in a binnacle. The star cannot mislead, unless read by the fractured instrument of a prayerless eye. The compass may mislead; but, with all its varying and oscillating, it does, in the main, point to the two poles,—"Righteousness exalteth a nation;" and, "The nation that will not serve Thee shall perish."

As to revelation, whether it assigns heavenly or earthly purposes to the Sabbath, no argument need be raised. If any one tells me that the Creator deals with our race as so far gone, that the highest thing to which He can invite us is the study of curiosities and pictures, which not one in ten thousand of that race can ever by possibility see, I lay my hand upon my Bible, and look up, and say, "The Father of spirits loves us better." Fallen though we be, His redeeming mercy invites us even while on earth to taste somewhat of the spirit of Heaven. During one-seventh of all time that passes over us, He unnerves alike the hand of rapacity and the hand of power, permitting no hand to be lifted above us but His own, thus appealing to our reverence and loyalty; ordains that we shall have bread without labour, thus appealing to our trust and gratitude; appoints for us

engagements which have no sensual zest and no worldly return, thus appealing to our hope of a life wherein we shall be as the angels of God; sets before us themes of thought, each of which reaches out on all sides into infinity, thus appealing to our desire for fellowship with Himself!

The ground on which an argument may be raised, as to whether the Sabbath had better not be too religious, is certainly not that of revelation, but, if any, that to which a statesman ought undoubtedly to give much attention,—experience. Our working population are divided into three classes, English, Irish, and Scotch. In Ireland,—at least in the south and west,—the labouring classes are not deeply impressed with the opinion that the day ought to be given to subjects "exclusively theological." Are they quite free from "that ignorance which we all lament?" Among the working people of England, the conviction that the whole day ought to be religiously kept is much more extensively diffused, and so are the advantages of education in about a corresponding degree. In Scotland this conviction is still more extensively diffused. In a degree corresponding, the people rise in education and intelligence above those of the other two countries; an intelligence which, in every field of mental activity, whether literature, commerce, or the public service, gives to Scotland an amount of power much beyond that due to her on the ground of the proportional amount of her population; and this in the face of the national vice of whiskey-drinking, which sorely defaces the country, blunts the edge of every moral lesson that otherwise might be drawn from the case of Scotland, and, but for the powerful counteraction of religious teaching and a holy Sabbath, would have reduced her as low as ever Ireland fell. So far, therefore, as the aggregate experience of the three kingdoms goes, it may be very confidently asserted that it does not point to a non-"theological" Sabbath as an educational "remedy," in the "direction" of which our legislation ought for the future to tend.

Even in Scotland, however, your Lordship may find utterly uneducated individuals. From what families do they come? From families in which the "popular opinion," that the

Sabbath should be devoted to subjects "exclusively theological," was very strongly and practically felt? Or from families in which that opinion was disregarded, and the day was spent according to the pleasure of the individual? Undoubtedly from the latter. In families of the former class, you will uniformly find the younger members rising up with the rudiments of intelligence, and a bent towards learning. In England, too, we find large classes who are ill educated, or uneducated. From what families do the worst of them spring? From the families of those poor men to whom the Sabbath is indeed God's holy day? Or from the families of those to whom it is nothing more than a day of pastime? If you take the town populations, it will prove that those of them who grow up without education, are the children of sabbathless parents. In country parishes the same class are generally either children of those parents in whose parish a drowsy pulpit has lulled spiritual and intellectual life to sleep, or of those who, in spite of all the labours of faithful men, have continued to disregard the sacred uses to which the Sabbath should be turned. Look where you will, your Lordship will discover the proof, that they who reverence the Sabbath contribute to the intelligence of the country; whilst those who profane it, if of the lower classes, too often rear their offspring in utter ignorance.

It would be hard to conceive a reproach more undeserved or more bitter, thrown on that portion of the working men of England—alas! far too small—who keep their Sabbath as Christians ought to keep it, than that they should be told from the high places of the country, that on their heads, and especially on their piety, lies the curse of the ignorance which afflicts the untaught children of their ungodly neighbours. It is my honour and my joy to be associated in church-fellowship with tens of thousands of the workers in some of the rudest labours of the country,—men who, in the darkness of Cornish mines or in the vapours of coal-pits, in the heats of Staffordshire forges or northern mills, toilsomely spend their week; yet, blessed by religion with a better life than that which the outward eye sees, once in seven days they can rise with the prospect of peace before them,

and say, "This is the day the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad in it." Their children, my Lord, you will find at school, when a penny can be found to pay for the schooling, and at the Sabbath-school on the Sabbath-day, stimulated, with many a word and many a wish, to make themselves bright and wise; and from among their sons men are often given to the country whose intelligence and talent are of real value to all. One of the last things to have been expected was, that the religious portion of our working population should be rendered accountable for precisely that one evil which, so far as their influence has extended, they have done their utmost to reduce.

To the prevalent feeling as to the sanctity of the Lord's day, which your Lordship is so strangely pleased to oppose, the country is indebted for one of the most powerful agencies which our own generation has seen for the diffusion of popular education. Under shade of the sacredness of the day, the very classes who in other countries are most completely deprived of the Sabbath,—shopkeepers and clerks,—here have it at their own disposal. Such of these as desire to give it entirely to works that God loves, have betaken themselves to the education of the children of those who would otherwise have let them grow up in ignorance; and at this moment we count these gratuitous teachers of the children of others by hundreds of thousands. Did your Lordship succeed in destroying "the popular opinion" as to the sacredness of the day, all these classes would be deprived of this opportunity to teach, and of the inclination too. Your Lordship will be totally unable to point out any class of the Sabbath-breaking population, who have extensively given themselves to the painstaking training of the children of the poorest. That work has been done by the lovers of the Sabbath, done by virtue of the protection of the Sabbath, done in hope of that eternal reward which is prefigured by the Sabbath; and if public men do not smile upon the work, they should at least abstain from branding it as the cause of popular ignorance.

There are Englishmen, perhaps not unworthy of the name, who see a national glory, gentler, but not fainter, than that

of our matchless defenders, in the weekly movement whereby four hundred thousand men and women, nearly all busy for six days, devote the leisure of the seventh, not to ease, or diversion, but to open the mind, and mellow the heart, of children who would else be neglected. There are many goodly mansions in England, and perhaps some parliamentary seats, the occupants of which owe their first intellectual stimulus to these holy labours. Let the smile of rising politicians light where it may, the dying blessing of many a working boy and girl has lighted on the head of the Sunday-school teacher.

Turning from our own country to others, do we find that, in those where they are farthest from being impressed with the conviction that the whole of the Sunday ought to be "theologically" spent, they are greatly superior to Scotland, England, and the United States, in point of popular education? Your Lordship will find yourself totally unable to produce, from the annals of Europe, one material fact, or to instance among its people a single nation, in corroboration of the marvellous affront which you have thought it seemly to cast in the face of the religious people of this country.

On hearing those wonderful words of your Lordship, one forgot all the surprise and shame which at an earlier part of the evening had been felt, when honourable gentlemen were calling upon England to take example from the Roman Catholic countries of the Continent. One had, in that case, the privilege of hoping that the acquaintance of those gentlemen with the countries they spoke of, was that of passing travellers,—that they had never permanently resided in them, seen society to its centre, and known what are the social results of the brilliant Sundays, and the pliable religion, which had so struck their eye,—of hoping that they were quite unaware how the civil liberties, the domestic morals, the criminal calendars, and the popular education of such countries compared with those of our own. If they did know all this, and with such knowledge cited them as worthy to be, in any thing affecting morals, an example to us, they deserve a certain place in the esteem of Englishmen: that place assuredly I shall not attempt to describe. But

when your Lordship, speaking much more thoughtfully than they, cast the blame of the existing ignorance of our own country, not upon its irreligion, but upon its religion,—not upon those who set to the people the example of using the Lord's day for their own pleasure, at the cost of their dependents' rest, but upon those who hallow that day, and employ it for the enlightenment of their humbler neighbours,—all excuse was at an end, and one was left to marvel how such a perversion of praise and blame could have entered any mind.

Another capital point in your Lordship's argument was the tendency of such intellectual studies as are presented by galleries of art to promote moral improvement. We can never more effectually deprive any branch of education of its legitimate influence, than by ascribing to it some effects which it is not adapted to produce. The legitimate influence of art, as a branch of education, is great and beneficial; but it is not moral, except in a very indirect and secondary way. The true province of art is, to refine taste and polish manners. This a familiarity with the works of the great masters has a powerful tendency to effect; and for this much more might have been done in this country to the advantage of our population. But, to infer that by refining taste and polishing manners you elevate morals, is what neither the philosophy of our nature nor the history of cities and nations will support. In the early republics of Greece, in the empire of Rome, in the Saracenic nations, in all more Eastern kingdoms, and in many modern States, the progress of refined taste and polished manners has kept pace with the decay of moral strength and the growth of every corruption. That modern city which has been distinguished above all others for the studious cultivation of the arts—Munich—is also distinguished for this terrible fact,—that one out of every two births is illegitimate. Of the condition of morals in the other great cities distinguished for their cultivation of the arts in Europe, I need not inform your Lordship: it is so bad, that he who would call on England to take example by those cities would forfeit his claim to be considered an Englishman. If from the cultivation of the arts alone we expect moral improvement, that expectation

is founded on some private theory, to which the past experience of mankind has made no contribution. And if art be prosecuted to the sacrifice of Christian devotion, if Sabbaths be desecrated for the sake of pictures and statues, we shall soon prove in England what is fearfully proved elsewhere, that the pencil may become a more exciting corrupter than the pen, and the graces of colour be made a public tempter and shame. States have terribly suffered from corrupt art before to-day. It is a statement which may be made without fear of contradiction, that just before the outbreak of the last French Revolution, in 1848, seven tenths of all the caricatures exhibited in Paris were caricatures of domestic life, and of connubial infidelity. Use Art for her own proper purpose of refining the taste and polishing the manners of our people; but never expect from her that which she has never performed, for which she carries in her hand no commission from God, and no credentials from the past generations of men.

One gentleman who took part in the debate wished to consider the question as one of property. The Museums, he held, were the people's property, and the people had a right to enjoy them on Sunday. It was not very modest of that gentleman to imply that the national property of England belongs to those who concur in his opinions upon religion,—for possibly it would not be correct to say, his religious opinions. The majority of the people of this country would believe that their property was turned to an unholy use, if employed to diminish the sacredness of God's day; nor will they fail duly to appreciate the noble stand made by the House. Those among the working classes who would claim that the national property should be used on the Sabbath for purposes of pleasure, are not those whose general example and opinions are most helpful to the welfare of the community. That gentleman seems to feel as if there were no comfort in having Sunday to oneself, unless accompanied by power to work others for one's entertainment. His reasoning strongly reminded me of that which is said to be sometimes heard in America: "What use is it to live in a free country, if one cannot flog one's own Nigger?" A

"secular" artisan is sorely wronged, if, having his Sunday given to him by the religion at which he sneers, that religion holds off his hand from the rest of stokers and porters, and poor shop-assistants. *He* may hope to destroy the religion of the day, and retain *his* rest; but at least a Member of Parliament might see far enough to know, that if you destroy the cause, the effect will follow it.

The same gentleman indulged in sneers at religion, as being the great foe of amelioration, instancing several desirable improvements to which the objection was religion. However familiar those sneers may be, their production in the national legislature, and the patience with which they were there heard, were somewhat startling. The reply to them is very simple. If that gentleman states, that religion stands in the way of the education of the children of the poor, we naturally inquire, What have the "secularists" done for the education of the poor? They have endeavoured, in Parliament, to make education at the national expense, not at their own, an instrument for banishing religion from the attention of the youth of the country. They have also endeavoured, in our large towns, to take the young men whom the religious public had trained in the first rudiments of general education, and pervert the knowledge they possessed to purposes religiously and socially evil. But what is it which has given to the children of the poor in England such education as they do possess? Religion. What is it that has shortened the hours of drudgery for the factory child and the factory girl? Religion. What has originated and extended Ragged Schools? What has roused and strengthened the cry of the shopman against excessive hours of labour, and secured to him numerous advantages previously unknown? What has emancipated the Negro slave? What has civilized, within our own time, some savage, and even cannibal, tribes of men? What is the strength of the only free Constitutions which exist in the civilized world? What, in fact, is the moving power of all real human progress in our own day? Many questions in the same direction might be added, to all of which the answer would be,—Religion.

One objection against the Sabbath raised in the debate is well worthy of note, because both of its merits and of the quarter whence it came. Mr. Heywood argued that, since geology had taught us that the earth was in existence "countless millions" of years before man was created on its surface, all our views respecting creation must be modified. This argument is frank and thorough-going. If it carried any weight at all, it would bury the Sabbath—rest, religion, recreation, and all—in the body of the Iguanodon. I am not sure that I clearly trace the chain of sequence; yet, in the reasoning of a gentleman so accomplished as Mr. Heywood, one is under the necessity of looking for a chain, a labour from which such happy thinkers as Mr. Biggs and Sir Joshua Walmsley set one deliciously free.

Is this the argument,—Because the time that passed before man was created was of immeasurable length, therefore the laws made for his benefit after he was created are of immeasurable uncertainty? Or this,—Because the Bible tells us nothing of what occurred between "the beginning," when the heavens and the earth were created, and the point, six days before man was made, when "the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep;" therefore what it does tell us as to what occurred after that point, is not correct? Or this,—Because the Bible does not give a history of Saurians, therefore, though its history of the origin of man is the only one that has stood the friction of ages, we must reject it? It is not necessary to put other suppositions, as I will not do either the reason or the candour of Mr. Heywood the injustice of supposing, that he invited the House to accept a conclusion resting on premises which are disputed and disbelieved,—that the account the Bible does give of Creation, when rightly understood, is untrue.

The argument reminds me of one used by a Jamaica planter, who invited the Rev. R. Young, a distinguished Missionary, to preach to his slaves in his hall. The moment the sermon closed, he stood up, and told his people that Mr. Young had deceived him. He had asked him to teach them industry and morality; but, in fact, he had condemned

things that were not bad,—Sabbath work and another sin. As to the latter, he had good reasons why it was innocent; and as to the other, the Sabbath did not apply to them in Jamaica at all; for the fourth Commandment was given before ever Jamaica was discovered. It would not be correct to say that the arguments are exactly parallel; for the planter seems to hold, that a law made before a place is discovered, does not apply to that place; whereas Mr. Heywood seems to hold, that a law made for a race after it is created, does not apply to that race.

Geology has done much to put an end to that unworthy fear which some religious people felt of physical science, lest its discoveries should wound the authority of revelation. None now but the ignorant and the narrow-minded fear that Nature, however much she may aid our interpretation of the Bible, will ever discredit it. More than one doctrine has derived forcible aid from geology, as in former times was the case with astronomy. But it will be a dark day for science, if ever it falls into the hands of those who would use it to rob man of his most ancient and most hallowed joys. Whatever doubts hang on other parts of Bible history, none hangs on this,—that the first entire day MAN spent on the face of the earth was "blessed and hallowed" by a special smile from the Creator. And even after sin brought a curse on other days, this retained its blessing, and, as if the birthday of the race, weekly came to remind man of his innocent beginning, his good Father, and his home. On that day Adam's face dropped no sweat, and even Cain's load was somewhat lighter. After ages of sin and error, the day, still retaining its blessing and its hallowing, ceased to be the mere memorial of our birth, and became also that of our reconciliation. From Adam's day to ours, the original blessing has never been annulled, nor will it ever be. Till all toils end, the heirs of that blessing shall yearly increase, and more men and more will weekly bless the hallowed hours which recall Eden, and foreshadow yet a better land.

One of the most remarkable portions of your Lordship's speech is that in which you manifest a hope, that the opening of Sunday exhibitions would be the cure, or, at least, an

important step towards the cure, of our national curse of drunkenness; and this was the more remarkable, as your Lordship seemed to look upon the partial closing of the public-houses on the Lord's day as a measure scarcely to be maintained. If public-houses were opened, and exhibitions opened too, and this legislation effected a cure of our national vice, your Lordship would be entitled to the credit of having accomplished that work more easily than any one has ever dreamed of doing. That sight-seeing has a tendency to draw people from public-houses, is a conclusion that has yet to be countenanced by any piece of evidence from our national experience. Every publican has taken it for granted that the neighbourhood of an exhibition was a good place for him; and there can be no manner of doubt that, were our Museums opened on Sunday, public-house property in their vicinity would at once increase in value. Had your Lordship advocated at the same time the total closing of public-houses, and the opening of exhibitions, there might have seemed something like a plan to draw off the working classes from the former places of resort; but so long as men, when wearied, or desirous of refreshment, are in the habit of going to one of those dens which we call a "public-house," the mental and physical fatigue which visiting Museums must always induce, will certainly be reason enough for leading them by hundreds to their ordinary haunts.

No means act so powerfully on the British working man in restraining him from drink as the direct influence of religion; no families among the working classes are so free from its curse as those who sacredly reverence the Sabbath; but, of the means auxiliary to religion, there are others far more potent than sight-seeing, of whatsoever kind. Did your Lordship zealously co-operate with Lord Shaftesbury—a Peer on whose head rest many blessings from the working people of England—in his endeavours to improve the dwellings of the poor, to give to the working man an airy, healthy, inviting home, you would strike much deeper at the root of the public-house curse than ever will be done by any exhibition, however innocent or improving. It

is not possible to maintain in the mind of the public any deep impression of the sacredness of the Sabbath, or any conviction that our legislation on the subject is other than eccentric, not to say insincere, while they see that, though unlawful to sell cloth, or calico, or other useful things, it is lawful to sell gin. Whilst an occupation is legalized on the Lord's day, the innocence of which on any day may be questioned, and is questioned even by large numbers of those who are its victims, we must expect that a great portion of our people will suffer serious moral hurt. True, those eternal enemies of the working man, who always affect to set his case and that of the rich man in contrast, tell us that the cellar of the rich man is open on Sunday to him, and why not the only place to which the poor man can go? The very simple reply is, that were our working people protected from the snare of the Sunday public-house, they are few indeed who would not be able, out of the savings which this alone would secure to them, to provide themselves in their own homes with a cask of undrugged beer, if they desired it. The law does not leave rich men at liberty to ruin themselves on all occasions and in all ways which they may choose. It interferes with gaming-houses and lotteries, and says to the folly of the rich, as it ought to do to that of the poor, "There is a limit beyond which the law does not permit you to go."

No opinion is so odd but it may be backed by great names. Thus it is possible to produce most respectable authorities for the idea, that though the Father of all men gave to Patriarchs and Jews a day of sacred rest in every seven, guarded by the awful defence of His authority, He has withdrawn that defence from Christians, and left it to the option of the Church, whether they shall have a whole day of rest, a half-holiday, or a morning for work and prayer, with an evening for drink and play. Put into English, instead of abstract formula, this, my Lord, is the dogma for which you may quote the authority of grave moralist and keen logician. But never will the gravity of any moralist, or the acumen of any logician, carry such a notion into the conscience of the simple Christian, whose religious instinct,

enlightened only by a Word and a Spirit truer than the reasonings of the truest reasoner, tells him, that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance;" that if men ever lose what their Creator has once bestowed, it is not through inconstancy in His goodness, but only through their own perversity. Neither will they carry this notion into the convictions of the philosophic Christian, who, unable to conceive of a good human government, recalling moral boons from its subjects, breaking down sacred rights which it had long maintained, and exposing the weak to the passions of the strong, cannot conceive of the King he adores,—whose government is to him the only fountain of freedom and order, of honour and joy,—recalling one of the largest and most pervasive privileges ever secured to man, and leaving it to be settled by churches, whether every moment shall be like its fellow, or some fair portion of time be sacred to each human being, as a pledge that he has a good God above him, and a good life before him.

But you say to the ploughman, "The law of the Sabbath is not a moral law, but a positive law." He would reply, "I don't know what you mean by moral laws and positive laws; but it seems just as moral to me that my master should let me rest on Sunday, to renew my strength, think of my soul, and have some time with my children, as it is for me to let his horses alone when they have done his work, and not make them do a job for myself." The shop-boy says, "Positive! is it any worse for being positive? I'm glad it is positive; for if it wasn't, I should never have a day to myself; and I'm sure it is as moral that my master should keep his hands off my Sunday as that I should keep my hands off his till." You tell this to the young lawyer, as he is debating with his conscience whether he will obey the mandate of Sir —— ——, the great "leader," to attend a Sunday consultation. He says, "I will never do it. It is murderous. Had F——t allowed himself his Sunday, he might have been alive now. Much as he did in seven days, he would have done more in six." This is bravely said; but thoughts of briefs, silk gowns, the bench, and perhaps the woolsack, come in. "Well, but, after all, it is a positive

law, not a moral one. Let us see." He takes up the Bible. "Not a moral law! My parents have a moral claim recognised here. The fellow that insulted my sister, whom I felt inclined to shoot, has a moral claim, consecrated by this sixth commandment. That ——, who carried off Mary from me, has a moral claim consecrated by this seventh. Hard as I am up, my clerk has a moral claim to be paid what he is worth, consecrated by this eighth. Even ——, though he does stand in my way all he can, has a claim that I shall tell no more than is true of him, consecrated by this ninth. Every soul I meet has here, by the tenth, under the kindly name of 'neighbour,' his claim consecrated, and rightly too, not only to my good actions, but to my good feelings. And does this law teach me that the only being who has not a moral claim on my attention, affections, and time, is God that made me? Or that, having such a claim, He has not a moral right to appoint its most fitting recognition? Butler, Paley, and Whately, ought to understand morals; but as this commandment connects those which claim God's rights with those which claim man's, and provides in itself an abiding defence of both, it seems rather dangerous law to throw it down, and, driving the Pope's coach over it, turn round to the crowd in the streets, and recommend them to be tender of the other nine."

One can scarcely acquit the man of holding one creed for office, and another for himself, who solemnly reads out the fourth commandment, as one of the WORDS which "God spake" with that voice at which an assembled nation trembled; and yet does what he can to write it down, as if, instead of a charter, it was a yoke,—instead of a rest, a ceremony. Ceremonies are burdensome, and gave place to some "better thing," of which they were the type. The Sabbath is a rest, and a delight, of which the antitype and "better thing" is heaven. While earth stands, it stands. A restraint it is, as are all good laws; but a restraint only on him who would deprive another of rest for his own pleasure. Whether this be a luxurious gentleman, or a pleasure-loving workman, it is equally just that the commandment, by restraining him, should protect those whom he would compel to work.

It is possible your Lordship may not have reflected on the moral tendency of mixing up in the mind of a multitude the holiest acts of religion with the most frothy levities of pleasure. Is hurrying youth from the altar of God, to games in the country, and plays in town, likely to form a deep soil for thought, conscience, and principle? Is it probable that ideas of order will be fostered in England by such a scene as Protestant Sweden has ere now beheld,—an Archbishop confirming his young friends at the Lord's table on Sunday morning, and introducing them to society at his ball on Sunday night? Would English sincerity, sobriety, thoughtfulness, and perseverance increase, if every seventh day—instead of a lesson of self-restraint, of respect for the rights of others, of thoughtfulness, of the fear of God—became a lesson in the odd art of uniting devotion and dissipation in the greatest possible degree? What says the reason of man? and What the experience of Paris?

My Lord, if one wanted an instrument for demoralizing a people, one could not hope to get any nation blind enough to accept one which would work more speedily than a French Sunday. Give a people such a Sunday, and then, by inevitable consequence, religion and farces are associated in the mind, things opposite as Christ and Belial brought together, a grave and thoughtful habit rendered difficult, and in practice the stage becomes the *pulpit*. Mr. Biggs, with that singular intelligence which distinguished his speech, among other reasons why England should learn moral lessons from Roman Catholic countries, alleged that Protestantism, by its strict Sabbath, drove *men* from its pale; and, as a way to bring *men* within its pale, advised us to copy the sweet Sundays which Rome prepares for her flocks. Does Mr. Biggs not know (your Lordship does well) that, as a rule, in Roman Catholic countries, the only preacher *men* hear is the play-actor? As a statesman, it may not be lost time to your Lordship to ponder now and then this question,—How much of the difference in the fitness of the English and French people for free institutions and stable authority arises from the fact, that, as a rule, the boys and men of one country every week hear a thoughtful sermon;

and, as a rule, the boys and men of the other hear the teaching and preaching of the stage? Where the "ecclesiastical statesman" undertakes to make sinning safe as to the life to come, and the actor makes it pleasant as to this life, then, to keep it from passing bounds, the despot is a public necessity.

The following remark of Mr. Hallam, respecting the national influence of a devout or a pleasuring Sunday, at once shows that he can observe, and that on this point he observes, like too many others, superficially. He is speaking of the "Book of Sports," the very name of which ought to carry some admonition to our legislators:*—"The Church of Rome, from which no ecclesiastical statesman would disdain to take a lesson, had, for many ages, perceived and acted upon a principle, that it is the policy of Government to encourage a love of pastime and recreation in the people; both *because it keeps them from speculating on religious and political matters, and because it renders them more cheerful, and less sensible to the evils of their condition:* and it may be remarked by the way, that the opposite system so long pursued in this country, whether from a puritanical spirit, or the wantonness of petty authority, has no such grounds of policy to recommend it."

Grounds of policy! If policy lies in keeping men thoughtless, and in making them laugh till they are too frivolous to withstand oppression, then nothing more excellent than the Sunday devised by "ecclesiastical statesmen." But man is made to think, and to feel. You may divert him from both, but not for ever. And they who have best plied this crafty Sunday, though they have not the care of governing free men, have not the joy of governing loyal ones. Rulers whose strength lies in the amusements, and not in the convictions, of the people, are at once dependent on the mountebank, and in dread of the demagogue. Sheets might be filled with plain things on the short-sightedness of that "ecclesiastical statesmanship" which Mr. Hallam unfortunately

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* "The Book of Sports," a valuable Lecture, by the Rev. C. Hebert, Rector of Burslem, gives a history which the working classes ought generally to be made acquainted with. (Seeleys.)

would not disdain; but it is enough to say that while, in the countries that keep a holy Sabbath, good government has to dread none of the lower orders but those who love the theatre and kindred inspirations, in Romish countries no ruler would think of attempting to govern for a single year without the play-actor. Neither of our august allies, the Emperor of Austria, or the Emperor of the French, would answer for his throne, if his people were not amused by the stage. No people who had time to think and grow steady, would be ruled as theirs are ruled; while all thoughtless multitudes are only fit to be curbed and diverted like children. With due respect for "ecclesiastical statesmen," He who made man, meant him to have time to think; and when he has that time given to him, avowedly on the authority of the Almighty, he learns to respect all just authority, and, at the same time, grows too strong for arbitrary rule. Never will a Sabbath-keeping community be the congenial sphere of either demagogue or despot.

Both Sir Joshua Walmsley and another gentleman argued that irreligious men by Sunday visits to picture-galleries would be converted from the error of their ways. They did not use this intelligible language; but if that which they did use had any substance, this was the substance of it. It would be a pleasant mode of converting sinners; but would it be effectual? The people of Rome have seen pictures and improving Museums to a considerable extent. So have those of Florence, Munich, Paris. It was a strange thing to hear Englishmen call on us to learn from the people of these places any thing upon morals and privileges. Why did no Englishman in your honourable House send those unblushing gentlemen to the records of crime, and make even them cower under the recoil of the insult they had offered to our people? The black peasantry of Antigua and Barbadoes but yesterday were slaves, and never have had any training but what has been given them by men whose religion would be described by Mr. Biggs (of course, "not using the word in any offensive sense") as "fanatical superstition;" yet if they knew even the *public returns* of offences in these blessed art-cities, much more if they knew the dreadful things covered with fair veils,

they would feel odiously affronted by being called upon to take any moral example thence.

One would fain hope that the reason why, when our nation was invited to imitate France, Italy, and Spain, the indignity was not eloquently resented by some English orator, was, that the speakers and their plea were too insignificant to arouse any of our strongest men. But many will suspect that a less honourable cause may be assigned; namely, the incredible ignorance of our public men on moral and religious questions, which leaves them too often to grope in the dark, amid facts which, if mastered, would throw floods of light on the deepest problems of national progress. They carry out the principle your Lordship condemns, of separating secular from sacred; and that so well, that if a question runs into the sphere of morals, men who wish us of the multitude to think them statesmen, look upon it as gone out of their sphere. When such fine things were said of the divine power of art over the moral man, how many of your Lordship's honourable associates had the exact figures of the comparative moral statistics of London and the great art-cities brought to their mind? How many of them even thought of that greatest of modern patrons of art, who made an end of his reputation and his reign together, in a way that will not give future Bavarian Kings strong faith in Sir Joshua Walmsley's doctrine of conversion by pictures? How many recalled the fact, that even among the easy Belgians, and in the city which seems consecrated to the genius of Rubens, scenes are to be witnessed, such as, for open indecency, some, who have taken pains to see the worst of many cities, know not where to equal? In smiling at the notion of converting bad men into good ones by picture-galleries, one no more denies the great value of art in its own sphere, than one would deny the value of arithmetic by smiling at a gentleman who assured us that we could make the people excellent grammarians by that science.

If your Lordship will trace the moral history of different localities in the kingdom for the last hundred years, you will hear many a tale of such transformations from lawless

rudeness to worth and good citizenship, as hereafter are, according to the new philosophy, to come from the pictures. You will find agricultural villages, whence persons were yearly transported, where the practices which led to this suddenly ceased; colliery districts, where frightful barbarism has steadily receded before increasing godliness; mining districts, where violence and flagrant vice have almost disappeared; and hordes of manufacturing population, that have been more or less restrained, mollified, and raised; a process yielding to the State the strength of virtuous and *loyal* citizens, and blessing families with good fathers, sons, and mothers. True, much remains undone; but so much has been done, that he who has not deeply studied the causes, operation, and effects of the moral changes witnessed in England during the last century, can hardly be considered an English statesman, except in the loose newspaper sense.

Where can Sir Joshua Walmsley and his smooth supporter, who so finely sneered at religion, lead us to one district wherein the first effects of this kind were traceable to conversions by art, gay Sundays, or "secularism?" Where, in Scotland, can Mr. Biggs point out a spot where they were due to the grace and labours of such men as the one whom he, so competent to decide, calls "one of the greatest philosophers Scotland ever produced, Mr. George Combe;" and not to the men who have imported to England, as he, "not in any offensive sense," says, "fanatical superstition?"

The plain fact is, that wherever these things occur, they occur through the labours of men, who, in the Redeemer's name, with zeal and love preach Christ crucified, preach repentance, faith, and holiness. The first wicked man whom this old and simple instrumentality converts from the error of his ways, in any neighbourhood, becomes the first moral power toward its elevation. In proportion as these converts multiply, crime, vice, and civil danger abate, while content, loyalty, and all the virtues grow. If these things are not so, honest inquiry in different places, from parties of all shades, will prove it. If they are so, that public man who should impair the power of religion in the country, and over-ride the conscience of those who have done all that has been done for the elevation of its poor, would bring

upon his head a responsibility of which time would not contribute all the weight, nor the judgment of man all the solemnity.

A few questions which cannot be discussed, may be stated: What is the effect of a rest, regularly recurring through boyhood and youth, as well as manhood, on the physical energy of a working man? What is the effect of the same on the mental energy of one whose labour is with the brain? What is the accumulated effect of this, when it has acted on many successive generations, upon the physical and mental energy of a nation, and consequently on their industrial, commercial, and literary power? What is the effect, on a family which labour early scatters, of a regular day of re-union? and when this acts on a whole people, what its effect upon national stability? Is the fact, that the only people who ever preserved their nationality while scattered all over the world, strictly keep a Sabbath, unconnected with their preservation? Is any thing indicated by the fact, that the three nations which lead the commerce of the world, and excel all others in wealth,—the Jews, the British, and the Americans,—are the three Sabbath-keeping nations? Is it found that, as a class, tradesmen who sell seven days in the week prosper equally with those who do not? Is it found that, as a rule, mechanics who spend Sunday in pleasure, work as steadily, bring up their families as comfortably, or live as long, as their religious comrades? Does a large proportion of juvenile offenders come from families who sanctify the Sabbath? Do any considerable proportion of criminals trace their first fall to pleasuring on Sunday? Is it well for England to copy France in this matter, at a time when many French thinkers deeply feel the curse of a Sunday that makes the multitude frivolous, and many French tradesmen are combining to get the privilege of rest? Is it for the moral welfare of the family of man, and for the mutual security of each in his rights, that all should be taught to disregard the right of the FATHER to thought, tokens of veneration, worship, honour, and love?

On a review of the whole case, a few simple conclusions are apparent:—

The public sense of the Sabbath-day's sacredness is the only protection of the working man.

Nothing threatens to impair the sense of its sacredness so materially, as the habit of the rich unnecessarily to work their servants on the Lord's day, and the steps already taken by the legislature towards legalizing Sunday pleasure and Sunday traffic.

No poor man can be wronged out of his Sabbath, without exposing other working men to the danger of a similar wrong, the actual labour of the one being pleaded in palliation of burdens meant to be laid upon the other; and no public institution can be made an instrument of Sunday amusement, without increasing the danger that all other public institutions shall be perverted to the same end.

A Sunday of mingled trade, religion, and dissipation, is an engine of social corruption and of national insecurity, leading to the choice between anarchy or despotism.

To avoid abuses of the sacred day, and to secure the enjoyment of its benefits to the greatest possible number, it is the duty of every individual so to use his own Sabbath rest and privileges, as not, in any avoidable degree, to interfere with the rest and the privileges of the poorest dependent.

There is something very solemn in hearing an honourable name quoted, to support measures which must be detrimental to the moral welfare of communities. One could hardly help wondering during the debate, if that bright and good man, Dr. Arnold, remained unmoved in his rest above, while his name was quoted to diminish the little of heaven that we have upon earth, and to rob the people of England of what opportunity they have of becoming wiser, holier, and happier. And, my Lord, I trust it will never come to pass that, when the wife of an English working man, accompanied by her little boy, is visiting the tombs of the Earls of Derby, she shall point to that of the fifteenth Earl, and say, "This was he who robbed us of the Lord's day. In the old time poor people in England used to have every Sunday to themselves; but now, God help us! we have to work Sunday and Monday just the same."

Writing in weak health, and at disjointed intervals of time, when I needed to be resting, I feel, my Lord, that the

subject has not been treated either with the breadth or the vigour which it deserves; but, feeble as my plea may be, I bless the God of heaven who permits this humble hand to write any line in favour of the oldest institution in existence, of the original act of legislation for man, of the law which, from the first father of our race down even to me, has yielded a periodical refreshment to the body and the soul of the creature, a perpetual glory to the benevolence of the Creator; in favour of the one stable scene witnessed in our moral world, which, among our shifting and restless occupations, comes in, ever and anon, itself the same from year to year, from generation to generation, thus impressing us with the consciousness that, all down its course, the unsteady stream of time glides upon the ground of eternity; and against the ill-contrived holiday which brings rest to those who are not weary, and work to those who are, which trains a nation to harmonize in its ideas, and group together on the same holy ground, sanctuaries and theatres, prayers and dances, sacraments and comedies, penances and masquerades. The one is at the same time the most indulgent, and the most purifying, institution existing among men, under which every nation that honours it grows thoughtful, strong, and free. The other, by the constant association in the mind of things the most frivolous with things the most divine, ruins the sense of moral order, ruins the depth, the earnestness, and the force of moral feeling, thereby undermines the only true foundation of free institutions and civil stability, and prepares the people for the joint ascendancy of the actor, the priest, and the despot.

May your Lordship's Sabbaths upon earth be many! may each of them in your own home be "a delight!" and then, with the blessing of your country on your head, may you enter into the "rest that remains for the people of God!"

I have the honour to be
Your Lordship's very humble
And most obedient Servant,
WILLIAM ARTHUR.

KENSINGTON, *April* 14*th*, 1855.